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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3749th meeting of the Security Council, held on 11 March 1997 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered the letter of 7 March 1997 and its annex from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council concerning the incident on 10 February 1997 involving a violent assault against a group of civilians attempting to visit a graveyard in West Mostar in the presence of the United Nations International Police Task Force (UN-IPTF), in which one person died and others were wounded (S/1997/201).

"The Security Council notes that the participants in the meeting on 12 February 1997 referred to in the letter from the Secretary-General agreed inter alia to request the UN-IPTF to conduct an investigation into that incident, to accept and endorse that report in full, and to draw the necessary conclusions concerning the arrest, bringing to trial and dismissal from office of those found responsible for instigating or participating in violent acts.

"The Security Council fully supports the conclusions drawn from the UN-IPTF report by the Office of the High Representative and fully supported by the UN-IPTF, the Commander of the Stabilization Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the members of the Contact Group.

"The Security Council strongly condemns the involvement by West Mostar police officers in the violent assault on 10 February 1997 as referred to in the UN-IPTF report annexed to the letter from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council of 7 March 1997 (S/1997/204).

"The Security Council also condemns the failure of the local police to provide protection to civilians subject to inter-ethnic attacks which occurred throughout Mostar both before and after the incident on

10 February 1997, and stresses the importance it attaches to preventing such incidents in the future.

"The Security Council takes note of the announced suspension of some of the police officers identified in the UN-IPTF report but remains deeply concerned by the failure to date of the responsible authorities to take all the necessary steps to implement the conclusions drawn from that report. It strongly condemns attempts by those authorities to place conditions upon the arrest and prosecution of the police officers identified in the UN-IPTF report as having fired upon the group of civilians.

"The Security Council demands that the responsible authorities, notably in West Mostar, immediately implement the conclusions drawn from the UN-IPTF report, and in particular suspend all relevant police officers and arrest and prosecute them without further delay. It also calls upon the responsible authorities to investigate all police officers involved in the incident.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to keep it informed of the situation. It will remain actively seized of the matter."